[*Translation*]

Panchayati Raj Sammelans

4783. SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of places where Panchayati Raj Sammelans were held during 1988-89;

(b) whether the Sammelans of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes representatives of Panchayati Raj at national level were held in Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi;

(c) if so, the action taken by the Government on the conclusions and recommendations made by these Sammelans; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) Panchayati Raj Sammelans were held during 1988-89 as under:—

1. Conference for Northern and Western States: Delhi 27-30 January, 1989;

2. Conference for Eastern and North Eastern States: Calcutta 3-7 April, 1989;

3. Conference for Southern States: Bangalore 27-29 April, 1989

(b) A National Conference on 'Panchayati Raj and Scheduled Castes' was held from 24-27 February, 1989 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. Another National conference on 'Panchayati Raj and schedule Tribes' was held from 4-6 March, 1989 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

(c) The Constitution (Sixty-Fourth Amendment) Bill, 1989 for revitalisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions which was introduced in Parliament in May, 1989 incorporated the conclusions and recommendations made by these Sammelans.

(d) Question does not arise.

[*English*]

Growth Rate of Agriculture

4784. SHRI TARA CHAND KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a decline in the growth rate of agriculture during the Seventh Plan as compared to the growth rate achieved during the Sixth Plan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have since taken/propose to take any effective measures to increase the growth rate of agriculture during the Eighth Five Year Plan period; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b). The growth rate of agriculture during the Sixth Plan appears to be very high since the base year of the SixthPlan was 1979-80 which happened to be a severe drought year registering fall of 13.4% in agricultural value added over the year 1978-79. With this very low base, the growth rate of agriculture during the Sixth Plan turns out to be 6.2 per annum as compared to 3.6% in the Seventh Plan. However, with 1978-79 as the base, the average growth over the six years including five years of the Sixth Plan turns out to be only 2.9%.

(c) and (d). Productivity and growth in agriculture will receive high priority during the Eighth Plan. The details of measures to be adopted, the programmes and the policies will be included in the Eighth Plan document which is under preparation.

Shortage of edible oils

4785. SHRI K. PARADHANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is acute shortage of edible oils in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c). On the basis of the agriculture Ministry's oilseeds production projection of 192.3 lakh MTs for the year 1990-91, the shortfall in the net edible oil availability is estimated at around 6 lakh MTs.

The remedial steps taken to increase the production of oilseeds/edible oils are:

1. Two centrally sponsored schemes namely national Oilseeds Development Projects (NODP) and Oilseeds Production Trust Project (OPTP) which were operating till 1989-90 have been merged during 1990-91 into a single scheme namely Oilseeds Production programmes (OPP) This scheme essentially provides assistance to the states for production and distribution of quality seeds, plant protection measures including supply of plant protection chemicals and equipments and organising demonstration of advanced technology.

2. The oilseeds projects of the NDDB.

3. Setting up of a Technology Mission on Oilseeds established in may 1986 for harvesting the best of production, processing and management technologies.

4. Better incentive to producers through fixation of minimum support prices of major oilseeds.

5. Intensification of research efforts for increasing the production of oilseeds.

6. Increasing the area under non-traditional oilseeds crops like soyabean and sunflower and exploitation of oilseeds of tree and forest origin, rice bran, etc.

7. Efforts for promoting oil palm cultivation and processing.

8. Setting up of necessary processing and infrastructural facilities to keep pace with the production programme of oilseeds.

9. Fiscal incentives in the form of excise rebate for use of certain non-conventional oils in the vanaspati so as to encourage increased exploitation of these sources of oils.

Export of Molasses

4786. SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Tamil Nadu has approached the Union Government to export its excess quantity of molasses;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Union Government in this regard?